



***NCLB* and the Highly Qualified Teacher**

GENERAL

1. Who must meet the “highly qualified” teacher requirements?

All teachers who teach (provide direct instruction) core academic subjects.

2. What requirements must be met in order to be considered a “highly qualified” teacher?

The federal law requires that all teachers of core academic subjects meet three basic requirements:

- Hold a bachelor’s degree, AND
- Hold full state certification (provisional, professional, or master teacher), AND
- Demonstrate subject matter competency in the core academic subject (s) taught.

3. What does “full state certification” mean?

In Maine, a teacher must hold a provisional, professional, or master teacher teaching certificate, and hold appropriate endorsement(s) for the current teaching assignment(s).

Note: Waivers, conditional, transitional, and targeted-needs certificates are NOT full Maine certificates.

4. What are “core academic” subjects”?

Core academics subjects include English, reading, or language arts; mathematics; science; social studies: civics and government, history, geography, economics; foreign language; and the visual and performing arts.

5. Where did the “breakout” of subjects within social studies originate?

The U.S. Department of Education separated social studies into four discrete subjects: history, geography, economics, and civics/government.

Questions and Answers



6. How do I demonstrate subject matter competency?

A teacher has two options for demonstrating subject matter competency.

OPTION #1 Meet one of the following:

- Have passed a rigorous content examination (elementary, middle, secondary), **or;**
- Hold an academic major or coursework equivalent to an academic major (24 semester hours) for each content area of the teaching assignment (middle and secondary only), **or;**
- Have coursework equivalent to an academic major (24 semester hours) for each content area of the teaching assignment (middle and secondary only), **or;**
- Hold an advanced degree in the content area of the teaching assignment (middle and secondary only), **or;**
- Hold National Board certification in the content area of the teaching assignment.

OR

OPTION #2 = HOUSSE

- Complete the Maine HOUSSE content knowledge rubric which assigns points for experience and professional development activities that focus on content area expertise, **and**
- Achieve 100 points total on the rubric. Points must be accumulated from at least three columns on the rubric.

7. What does HOUSSE mean?

HOUSSE stands for "High Objective State Standard of Evaluation." It is a state standard and a system by which the school or school district can determine that an experienced teacher meets the subject matter competency requirements in the law.



8. What do I do if I can't document that I have met the requirements for "highly qualified" teacher?

You can take and pass the Praxis II exam(s) required for the core academic course(s) for which you are seeking to become "highly qualified", **or**;

You can earn additional points on the HOUSSE rubric by:

- Taking more content (college courses or professional development) in the core academic subject(s) for which you are seeking to become "highly qualified," **and/or**
- Earning professional achievements/awards in the core academic course(s) for which you are seeking to become "highly qualified."

9. What teachers are exempt from the "highly qualified" teacher requirements?

Teachers of health and physical education, industrial technology, business and technology, vocational education, career education, family and consumer science, speech, counselors, librarians, nurses, occupational and physical therapists, and teachers of gifted/talented (if they are providing only support, supplemental, or enrichment instruction) are exempt.

10. By what date am I required to be "highly qualified"?

If you teach core academic subjects in a program supported with Title 1 funds and are a new teacher (new to the profession), you must be "highly qualified" upon initial employment. If you are an experienced Title I teacher or an experienced non-Title I teacher of core academic subjects (and you are not new to the profession), you must be "highly qualified" by the end of the 2005-2006 school year (August 31, 2006).

Note: Teachers in rural districts may have additional time to become "highly qualified." Those who are "highly qualified" in one content area, but also teach additional content areas, have until August 2007 to meet the requirements in other core content areas they teach.

11. How do the "highly qualified" teacher requirements apply to teachers of English Language learners?

If teachers of English language learners teach core academic subjects, they must meet the requirements for "highly qualified" teachers.

Questions and Answers



- 12. If a teacher is teaching an integrated course (for example, a middle school or high school humanities class for which the students will receive credit in more than one core content area) does that teacher have to meet the definition of “highly qualified” in core areas being taught?**

Yes. All teachers responsible for instruction in core content areas must be “highly qualified” in each of the content areas of responsibility.

- 13. Are teachers who teach core content courses in Alternative High Schools required to meet the definition of “highly qualified”?**

Yes. All teachers responsible for delivering instruction in core content areas must be “highly qualified.”

- 14. Must Pre-K or Adult Ed/GED teachers satisfy the “highly qualified” requirement?**

No. The law applies only to teachers of core academic subjects in grades K-12.

- 15. What about teachers working in gifted and talented programs?**

If teachers of gifted/talented are providing only support, supplemental, or enrichment instruction, they do not need to meet the “highly qualified” requirement. Teachers of gifted/talented students providing direct instruction in core academic subjects must be “highly qualified” in the core subjects they teach *at the academic level of the students*.

- 16. Can a graduate degree in education (e.g. MAT) be used to satisfy the “highly qualified” requirement? A graduate degree in administration?**

The “highly qualified” requirement focuses on content knowledge. The degree must be in the content area of the teaching assignment. Because a graduate degree in administration is not tied to a core academic content area, it would not satisfy the “highly qualified” requirement. However, any education related advanced degree is recognized in the Maine HOUSSE.

- 17. Which arts teachers must be “highly qualified”**

Teachers who hold certification for Music and/or Visual Arts must be “highly qualified” for those core contents. In August 2005, certification for teachers of Dance and Theatre will be required. That means teachers holding certificates in Dance or Theater *and* assigned to teach Theater or Dance must be “highly qualified” in their assignment.

Questions and Answers



18. Are part-time teachers required to be "highly qualified"

Yes. The requirement applies to part-time teachers providing content instruction in core academic subjects.

19. Does the requirement apply to teachers with emergency certificates?

Teachers who hold emergency certification cannot be "highly qualified" because they do not hold a full certificate. Their first step toward satisfying the definition is to obtain a provisional or professional certificate. After that, they can complete the Maine HOUSSE.

20. Are National Teachers Exam (NTE) scores from 25 years ago sufficient to satisfy the testing requirement?

No. A passing score on the NTE General Knowledge portion of the Core Battery is not sufficient for "automatically" satisfying the definition of "highly qualified" teacher. It is, however, a piece of evidence that can be used if the teacher chooses the HOUSSE option. (See column B in HOUSSE Rubric.)

21. Can a teacher be fully certified and still not satisfy the definition of a "highly qualified" teacher?

Yes. This is possible because some of Maine's current certificates/endorsements are not aligned to the requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act*. These areas include elementary, middle school teachers and special education teachers. The proposed changes to teacher certification address these areas to ensure that all elementary and middle school teachers are able to satisfy the definition of a "highly qualified" teacher. The Maine Department of Education is waiting for guidance from the US Department of Education on regulations related to special education teachers.

22. I have achieved "'highly qualified'" status for teaching grade 3 in New Hampshire. I have moved to Maine and will be teaching grade 2. Am I "'highly qualified'" in Maine?

You will need to complete the *Maine "Highly Qualified Teacher" Identification* form and provide the documentation that supports your NH "Highly Qualified" designation. This information will be evaluated at the local level against Maine's "Highly Qualified" standards.

Questions and Answers



- 23. I took and passed the PRAXIS II Elementary Content Test for California certification. Is this test acceptable by Maine as proof that I “automatically” meet the “highly qualified” designation for teaching elementary school in Maine?**

Yes, however it is not acceptable for certification purposes.

- 24. Why are some teachers exempt from fulfilling the “highly qualified” requirement?**

The federal focus is on core academic subjects and on ensuring a clear, discernable alignment of teachers’ content area preparation, certification, and actual work assignment(s).

- 25. Are teachers in Maine's private secondary schools that enroll 60% publically funded students ("60% schools") required to satisfy the federal definition of “highly qualified” teacher?**

No. Under the *NCLB* statute, the “highly qualified” teacher requirements apply only to public school teachers.

- 26. Must long and short-term substitute teachers meet the “highly qualified” requirements?**

Substitute teachers are not required to meet this standard. However, the federal government “recommends” that long-term substitutes meet the requirements for “highly qualified” teachers since the law requires that parents must be notified if their child has received instruction for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who is not “highly qualified”. Short-term substitutes do not need to meet the “highly qualified” requirements.

- 27. What is the best source of information on meeting the *NCLB* “highly qualified” teacher requirements in Maine?**

The Maine *NCLB* web page: <http://www.maine.gov/education>



FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

- 1. I am an elementary school teacher who was not required to take an Elementary Content test for certification. How do I become "highly qualified"?**

You are "highly qualified" if:

- You have earned National Board Certification in Elementary Education (NBPTS).
OR
- You pass the Praxis II Elementary Content Test (when it becomes available in 2005), or you took this test and passed it in another state before 2005.
OR
- You have accumulated at least 100 points on the HOUSSE Rubric.

- 2. Do elementary teachers have to show competency in all four, or more areas of the Elementary core curriculum, or just one area?**

Elementary teachers must show coursework and experience in a combination of the four elementary core subjects (English, Reading Language Arts; mathematics, science, social studies).

- 3. I am an elementary school teacher who teaches a core academic course in a departmentalized setting. Must I be "highly qualified" in the core academic course I teach?**

If you are "highly qualified" as an elementary school teacher, you are "highly qualified" to teach all core academic courses in an elementary school regardless of whether they are taught in a self-contained setting or in a departmentalized setting

- 4. Must elementary school specialists be "highly qualified" in *all* elementary subjects or just in the subject they teach?**

An elementary school teacher who teaches only a single subject (e.g., a reading or math specialist) needs to demonstrate subject matter competence only in the subject, which she/he specializes.



FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS

- 1. I have elementary certification that certifies me to teach all grades K-8 or 1-8. I teach a core academic course in a middle school. How do I determine if I am “highly qualified”?**

You are “highly qualified” if:

- You hold an advanced degree in the core academic subject you teach, **OR**
- You have a major in the core academic subject you teach, **OR**
- You have the equivalent of a major in the core academic course(s) you teach, **OR**
- You hold NBPTS certification in middle childhood, early adolescence, or adolescence and young adulthood; or NBPTS in the core academic subject you teach.

If not, you will need to accumulate at least 100 points on the HOUSSE Rubric for Middle/Secondary School Teachers or pass the Praxis II exam(s) required for the core academic subjects you teach when these become available in 2005.

- 2. I have secondary school certification in a core academic subject, and I am currently teaching on a transitional endorsement. Am I “highly qualified”?**

Not necessarily. If you have a major (or its equivalent), ***or*** have passed the required secondary Praxis II exam(s) for the core academic subject(s) being taught, you are “highly qualified.” If not, you must complete the requirements of your transitional endorsement and achieve provisional or professional certification. Then you may go to HOUSSE.

- 3. When I complete the HOUSSE Rubric for Middle/Secondary Teachers, what college coursework may I count?**

You may count any college-level course in the core academic subject for which “highly qualified” status is being sought. Education courses that are specific to the core academic subject may qualify including content pedagogy courses. For example, “Mathematics for Teachers” may be counted toward “highly qualified” status for middle school mathematics.



4. What teaching experience may I count?

Any years that you actually taught the core academic subject(s) to students in the grades covered in your middle school would count -- even if some of the experience was in an elementary school setting.

5. Are middle school teachers with elementary certification and passing scores on secondary Praxis II content exams for the subjects they teach "highly qualified" to teach middle school?

Yes. Passing a Praxis II content area exam at a higher (e.g., secondary) level qualifies teachers to teach that content area at all lower grade levels.

6. If I am assigned to teach language arts AND social studies, at the middle level, must I be "Highly Qualified" in language arts and each of the four subjects within social studies?

You would need to be "Highly Qualified" in language arts and in social studies, if social studies is not taught as four discrete subjects. This means you would have to provide evidence of course work and experience in a "combination" of the four social studies subjects (history, geography, economics, civics/government). However, if social studies is taught as, for example, history in grade 7 and geography in grade 8, and you are teaching both, then you would need to be "Highly Qualified" in both history and geography.

7. Must elementary certified middle school teachers teaching two subjects demonstrate that they are "highly qualified" in both content areas? Is there a percentage breakout based on how much time a teacher spends teaching one subject over another (i.e. 80 percent of day in math; 20 percent in science)?

Middle and secondary teachers must demonstrate that they satisfy the "highly qualified" requirement for each core academic subject they teach. There is no percentage adjustment based on the amount of time spent teaching each content area. Teachers who use the Maine HOUSSE Standard must accrue 100 points for each content area they teach.



FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

- 1. I teach two or more core academic subjects. Must I be “highly qualified” in each of them?**

Yes.

- 2. When I complete the HOUSSE Rubric for Middle/Secondary Teachers, what teaching experience may I count?**

Any years that you actually taught the core academic subject(s) would count (regardless of whether the experience was at the middle or secondary school level).

- 3. What college coursework may I count?**

You may count any college-level course in the core academic subject for which “highly qualified” status is being sought. In some cases, a single course that integrated content focus may count for two core academic subjects.

FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

- 1. I teach special education. Must I be “highly qualified”?**

Yes, if you provide direct instruction in core academic subjects, you must be “highly qualified” in each of the subjects you teach. This requirement applies whether you provide direct instruction in a regular classroom, a resource room, or some other setting.

- 2. Do special education teachers need to be “highly qualified” if they do not provide direct instruction in a core academic subject?**

Special educators who do not directly instruct students in core academic subjects or who provide only consultation to “highly qualified” teachers of core academic subjects using behavioral supports and interventions or selecting appropriate accommodations do not need to meet the “highly qualified” requirements.

Questions and Answers



3. What about middle school special education teachers who teach in self-contained settings?

Special education teachers must be "highly qualified" in the core subjects (curricula) they teach *at the academic level of the students*. For example, if a teacher provides instruction to a student with disabilities for whom an elementary level curriculum is appropriate, that teacher must be "highly qualified" in the elementary subjects taught.

4. What are the expectations for teachers of students with autism?

The "highly qualified" teacher initiative is based on content. The academic level of the students determines the instructional level for which a teacher needs to have content area expertise. Students with autism may function academically anywhere on the continuum from elementary through secondary levels in each of the core academic areas.

5. Do special education teachers working in resource rooms need to satisfy the requirement?

It depends on the work assignment. If the resource room teacher is providing direct instruction in core academic content, then the teacher needs to satisfy the definition at the appropriate grade level based on the content he or she is teaching. If the resource room teacher is providing "pull-out" support, but is not the primary teacher for content, then, no.

6. Is it possible that a special education teacher might be responsible for direct instruction in multiple content areas at a secondary level? If so, does the teacher need to be "highly qualified" in each content area?

Yes. If a teacher is providing direct instruction in multiple subject areas at the secondary level, he or she needs to satisfy the "highly qualified" definition at the secondary level for each of those content areas, if the secondary content is appropriate to the students' academic level.

7. If a special education teacher with elementary certification is working in a middle school, should the teacher qualify at the elementary or middle grades level?

It depends on the work assignment (direct instruction or support) and on the academic level of the students, not their age.

Questions and Answers



- 8. If a special education teacher is teaching only reading to special education students, does she/he need to be “highly qualified” in all elementary subjects, or just reading?**

This teacher has two options according to the law.

- He/She could be a “highly qualified” elementary generalist:
 - a. Take the elementary test (covering all core subject areas in the elementary curriculum), or
 - b. Go through the elementary HOUSSE if she is a veteran.

OR

- He/She could be an elementary specialist in reading:
 - a. Take a reading test for the elementary level, or
 - b. Go through a HOUSSE specifically for reading in the elementary curriculum

- 9. Is an 8th grade special education teacher who teaches language arts and who has passed the Praxis II in reading “highly qualified”?**

Yes. Special education teachers who pass the Praxis exam in the content area they teach, including elementary generalists, satisfy the definition of a “highly qualified” teacher.

- 10. If a high school special education teacher is working with students who are three grade levels behind but is teaching a high school curriculum, should the teacher be qualified at the secondary level?**

Again, it depends on the work assignment and what is the most appropriate academic level. Three years behind may still be a secondary level for content instruction.

- 11. Do special education teachers with conditional, transitional, or targeted-needs certification have to satisfy the “highly qualified” teacher requirement?**

Teachers with less than full certification must obtain full certification in order to assess their ability to satisfy the definition of a “highly qualified” teacher.



12. Must special education teachers who provide in-class support demonstrate that they are “highly qualified”?

No. For the time being, special education teachers who provide support are exempt. Once the IDEA has been reauthorized, we will have a better sense of how to proceed in terms of any requirements for special education teachers providing support.

13. If a special education teacher has dual certification as an elementary teacher, is he or she “highly qualified”?

No. The special education teacher would have to demonstrate competency in each subject taught, by completing HOUSSSE or taking the elementary content knowledge test when it becomes available.

14. What activities may special education teachers carry out if they are not “highly qualified” in the core content area being taught?

Special education teachers may carry out the following non-direct instructional activities:

- Assist a “highly qualified” teacher in adapting curriculum
- Assist a “highly qualified” teacher in using behavioral supports and interventions
- Assist a “highly qualified” teacher in selecting appropriate accommodations
- Assist students with study skills
- Assist students with organizational skills
- Reinforce instruction already received from a teacher who is “highly qualified” in the core academic subject.
- Consult with the classroom teacher

FOR ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION TEACHERS

1. Some schools have alternative educational placements for disruptive or behaviorally challenged students, which is generally a self-contained classroom with a limited number of students. How can teachers who teach in such alternative arrangements be considered to have met the “highly qualified” teacher requirements?

Teachers in alternative schools or programs who teach core academic subjects must meet the same requirements as teachers in corresponding grade levels in the regular classrooms.

Questions and Answers



- 2. I teach in an alternative secondary school. In what core academic subjects must I be "highly qualified"?**

You must be "highly qualified" for each core subject you teach.

FOR ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) TEACHERS

- 1. Are ESL teachers required to meet the "highly qualified" teacher requirements?**

Yes, if the ESL teacher provides instruction in core academic subject(s), the ESL teacher must meet the same "highly qualified" requirements as any other teacher of the core academic subjects.

TITLE I SCHOOL-WIDE AND TARGET ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

- 1. Does the requirement to be "highly qualified" apply only to teachers in Title I school-wide and targeted assistance programs?**

No. The requirement applies to all teachers of core academic subjects. Title I-funded schools have additional requirements related to parent notification and must hire teachers who satisfy the definition at the time of employment.

- 2. Must a teacher who is providing "supplemental" core content support (not direct instruction) to students in a Title I school-wide or targeted assistance program have to meet the definition of "highly qualified"?**

Yes. Unlike special education teachers who are not required to meet the "highly qualified" standard if they are providing support only, a Title I teacher who is providing additional core content support to students in a school-wide or targeted assistance program must meet the definition of "highly qualified".

Questions and Answers



3. Must all teachers in a school building meet the “highly qualified” definition, even if there is only a small group of teachers who teach Title I students?

Yes. In school-wide Title I programs, all new teachers must satisfy the definition at the time of hire. In targeted assistance Title I programs, only those teachers paid directly with Title I funds and working in the targeted assistance program must be “highly qualified” at the time of hire. All other new and newly hired teachers in non-Title I schools and teachers who do not provide Title I targeted assistance have until August 31, 2006 to satisfy the requirement.

4. Do veteran teachers in Title I-funded schools use the Maine High Objective Uniform State Standard Evaluation (HOUSSE) rubric?

Yes. Veteran teachers in Title I-funded schools have until August 31, 2006 to show that they fulfill the “highly qualified” requirement and may use the Maine HOUSSE Rubric to do so.

5. Are teachers working in before/after school programs and summer programs funded by Title I required to satisfy the “highly qualified” definition?

Yes. Teachers working in before/after school programs and summer school programs funded by Title I must meet the requirements.

6. If a targeted assistance program uses its Title I funding to purchase materials, such as computers, and pays the teacher out of district funds, does that teacher still have to meet the definition of a “highly qualified” teacher?

Yes. Schools that receive Title I funding must ensure that teachers satisfy the “highly qualified” requirement in targeted assistance programs, even when the teacher is paid with district funds.

7. What are the parent notification requirements? Do they apply to the entire school?

A school that receives any Title I funding, whether for a school-wide program or targeted assistance program, must inform all parents, not just those of students receiving Title I-funded services, that they have the right to inquire about the qualifications of their child’s teacher. In addition, schools must inform the parents of children who have received instruction for four or more consecutive weeks from a teacher who has not yet satisfied the “highly qualified” requirements.

Questions and Answers



- 8. If a district or a school within a district does not receive Title I funding, is that district required to notify parents about their inquiry rights or the status of teachers who have not yet satisfied the requirement?**

No. Only schools that receive Title I funds are required to notify parents of their rights to inquire about teachers' credentials and the status of teachers who are in the process of fulfilling the requirements. For example, in a district where only two of the schools receive Title I funding, only those two schools would be subject to *NCLB* parent reporting requirements.

- 9. What about K-8 certified middle school teachers and special education teachers in Title I-funded schools who have not been able to take the Praxis II exams to show their content area expertise?**

The Department of Education recognizes the problem inherent in not being able to offer the Praxis II exam until standard setting is completed early in 2005. The Department also recognizes the need to hire appropriately certified instructional staff and to support them in meeting the "highly qualified" requirement. While districts must endeavor to hire teachers who satisfy the "highly qualified" requirement, districts **may** hire middle school and special education teachers who satisfy current certification requirements with the expectation that these teachers will pass the relevant certification Praxis II exam(s) during the 2005-2006 school year. These teachers also have the HOUSSE option.

FOR MAINE PARAPROFESSIONALS **(EDUCATIONAL TECHNICIANS)**

- 1. What is a paraprofessional?**

In Maine, paraprofessionals are called Educational Technicians. For purposes of *NCLB* Title I, Part A, a paraprofessional is an employee who provides instructional support in a program supported with Title I, Part A funds.

Questions and Answers



2. What are the federal requirements for Title I paraprofessionals?

The federal requirements for Title I paraprofessionals whose duties include instructional support and who were hired after January 8, 2002, must:

- Hold an associate's degree or higher, **or**
- Have completed 48 semester hours from an accredited 2-year and/or 4 year college or university, **or**
- Achieve a passing score of 459 on the *ParaPro Assessment*.

3. What is the *ParaPro Assessment*?

- The *ParaPro Assessment* is the formal test that Maine has chosen to enable Title I paraprofessionals to demonstrate that they have the appropriate knowledge and ability to assist in instructing students.
- More information about the *ParaPro Assessment* can be found at:
<http://www.ets.org/parapro/>

4. What is the deadline for paraprofessionals who are already employed, and who must meet the federal requirement as outlined by *NCLBA*?

The federal requirement must be met by January 8, 2006.

5. If I am enrolled in an associate's degree program, and just have a course or two to finish during spring semester 2006, will I meet the federal requirement?

No. January 8, 2006 is absolute and does not allow any waivers or conditional agreements. Your employers must provide assurances that you will be assisted in meeting the paraprofessional "highly qualified" requirements.

6. What do I do when I have met the federal requirements as outlined by *NCLBA*?

When you have met the federal requirement by holding an associate's degree or higher, or by having 48 semester hours from an accredited college or university, or if you have taken and passed the *ParaPro Assessment* test, you need to submit the documentation to your Local Education Agency's *NCLBA* contact person. The contact person will forward verification that you have met the federal requirements to the Maine Department of Education. The Department will send you a card indicating that you have met the requirements for a "highly qualified" paraprofessional.

Questions and Answers



7. How do the new paraprofessional qualification requirements apply to paraprofessionals in a school-wide program?

The requirements outlined in the answer to Question 2 apply to all paraprofessionals with instructional duties in a school-wide program without regard to whether the position is funded with Federal, State, or local funds. In a school-wide program, Title I funds support all teachers and all paraprofessionals.

8. Does my associate's degree have to be in education?

No. The associate's degree must be from an accredited college or university.

9. Can an Ed Tech I meet the federal requirement?

Yes. An Ed Tech I can meet the requirement by passing the *ParaPro Assessment*. However, *an Ed Tech I who does not provide instructional support is not required to meet the federal requirements.*

10. If I pass the *ParaPro Assessment*, will I automatically get an Ed Tech II authorization?

No. Passing the *ParaPro Assessment* is one of the options you may take to meet the federal requirement. The Ed Tech authorization requirements for the State of Maine have not changed and they are not connected to the federal requirement.

11. How do the new federal requirements apply to paraprofessionals in a targeted assistance program?

In a Title I targeted assistance program, the requirements, as outlined in the answer to Question 2, apply to all paraprofessionals with instructional support duties who are paid with Title I funds.

12. What if a person has both instructional and non-instructional duties?

In this case, the Ed Tech must meet the requirements described in Answer #2 because he or she carries out instructional support duties.

13. What is required if a person performing non-instructional duties becomes an instructional paraprofessional?

In this case, the person is a "paraprofessional" as defined for Title I purposes and must meet the requirements outlined in Answer #2.



14. What are the requirements for paraprofessionals who work solely as translators or bilingual aides?

A paraprofessional who is proficient in both English and a language other than English, and who acts as a translator to enhance the participation of children with limited English proficiency must, under subpart A of Title I, have a secondary school diploma or its equivalent, but is not required to meet the federal requirements outlined in Answer #2.

15. Do the new federal requirements apply to volunteers?

No. Private individuals frequently volunteer to assist teachers in the classroom and support local schools by performing a variety of tasks for limited periods. Since they are not paid employees of a school district, they are not covered by the requirements for Title I paraprofessionals.

16. If I am authorized as an Ed Tech II with 45 semester hours and 15 credits in CEUs and contact hours, do I meet the federal requirement?

No. You will need an additional 3 semester hours, for a total of 48, or you may take the *ParaPro* test to meet the federal requirement.

17. How do I renew my Ed Tech authorization with the federal requirement?

The federal requirement needs to be met only once. A code number will appear on your Ed Tech authorization card to show that you have met the federal requirement. You follow the usual steps to renew your Ed Tech authorization from the Maine Department of Education with 3 credits of approved study every five years.

These are two separate, distinct, and unconnected processes.



SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

1. Where is the line that distinguishes between elementary and middle schools?

Generally, grades K-4 are considered elementary schools. A K-8 program could be considered elementary if classes are self-contained and teachers are responsible for content instruction in all or most elementary subjects. Middle schools are generally grades 5-8 if organized departmentally and teachers are responsible for one or two content areas. Intermediate schools (grades 4-5 or 4-6) are generally considered elementary schools because of the level of content instruction, especially if the district also has a designated middle school program.

2. Is a K-8 school elementary or middle with elementary?

A school that is K-8 could be deemed elementary if all classes are self-contained and teachers are responsible for delivering instruction in all subjects.

3. What about a grade 6-8 middle school configuration within a K-8 building?

If a K-8 building is organized departmentally for grades 6-8 or 5-8 and teachers in those grades teach one or more content areas exclusively, then this organization would be considered a middle school even if housed in a building with a K-5 self-contained elementary program.

4. How should teachers in grades 4-5 or 4-6 intermediate schools meet the “highly qualified” requirement – as elementary teachers or middle school teachers?

If the district also has a middle school (i.e. grades 7-8) then the intermediate school is clearly elementary in terms of the level of content taught. This applies even if two teachers divide some of the core content areas between them and, for example, one teaches science and the other teaches language arts while each also teaches math and social studies. If the curriculum is clearly elementary, teachers can satisfy the requirement as elementary generalists.

5. What about a K-5 elementary school in which the 5th grade is departmentalized?

In this case, it is up to the district to determine how 5th grade teachers will qualify. If there is also a middle school and the 5th grade content/curriculum is clearly elementary, teachers could qualify as elementary generalists even if working departmentally.



- 6. If a school is currently organized K-8 and is considering reorganizing in two years into a K-5 and a 6-8 program, should teachers meet the “highly qualified” requirement based on the current or planned organizational structure?**

Teachers should identify their status in relation to the current school organization.

LOGISTICS, COMPLIANCE, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- 1. What is required of Local Education Agencies (LEAs)?**

LEAs are required to assure that all teachers of core academic subjects are “highly qualified” by federal definition, to teach their assigned subject(s).

- 2. What if a teacher does not meet the “Highly Qualified” Requirements?**

There are no employment consequences. The law does not explicitly prohibit an LEA from hiring or retaining teachers in core academic subjects who are not “highly qualified” according to established timelines. Nor does the U.S. Department of Education want to see any effective teacher terminated from employment, or otherwise prevent any teacher who is not now “highly qualified” from receiving the support that teacher need to become “highly qualified”.

- 3. Will my certification be affected if I do not achieve “highly qualified” status by the August 31, 2006 deadline?**

No. Teacher quality requirements under *NCLB* are not certification requirements.

- 4. Who will administer the process of identifying “Highly Qualified” Teachers in Maine?**

The State has developed a process whereby “Highly Qualified” teacher identification will be administered locally. It may be administered by the building principal, by the support system team for a given school system or district, or by a designated *NCLB* Teacher and Paraprofessional “official” for the school or school district.

Questions and Answers



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5. What about consequences for individuals who do not comply with the *NCLB* requirements?

The "highly qualified" teacher requirement under *NCLBA* is a federal requirement. If a teacher is noncompliant, the supervisor has the full range of administrative options in terms of progressive supervision and disciplinary action to facilitate compliance with the requirement. Federal law requires that all teachers must be "highly qualified" by August 31, 2006.

6. What if schools hire teachers who do not meet the "highly qualified" requirement?

Schools are required to provide assurances that they will make every effort to provide and support professional development opportunities to ensure all teachers achieve "highly qualified" status.

7. What requirements do school districts have once the paperwork is completed?

Districts must maintain records at either the building or district level. The Maine Department of Education will survey districts to gather data to meet the State's reporting obligations to the federal government.



THE MAINE HOUSSE STANDARD CONTENT KNOWLEDGE RUBRIC

- 1. Is there a point limit on content area college coursework? Is there a time limit on when coursework was completed?**

No. There is no maximum number of points for this column, and there is no time limitation on when coursework was completed.

- 2. Does a middle school or special education teacher who teaches two or more content areas need to accrue one hundred points in each area?**

Yes. A teacher with multiple content area teaching assignments must satisfy the definition of a “highly qualified” teacher for each content area.

- 3. Could special education courses taken over 20 years ago count on the Maine HOUSSE Standard Rubric?**

Yes. This is true for all veteran teachers, not only special education teachers. The coursework must be content based. Pedagogy courses with a content base would accrue points on the HOUSSE.

- 4. If a teacher accrues less than one hundred points on the Maine HOUSSE Rubric in one district and then transfers to a new school district, is the second district permitted to exercise independent judgment with regard to the number of points the teacher accrues on the Maine HOUSSE Standard?**

Yes. Each district has the right to make this determination in relation to the teaching assignment the teacher fulfills in that district. However, once a teacher has satisfied the definition of “highly qualified” for a content area and grade level, that designation stands. If a teacher transfers to a new district in Maine, the new district must accept the teacher as “highly qualified” in accordance with the determination made at the time the teacher fulfilled the requirement. Remember, The HOUSSE is a state-specific standard. There is no guarantee that another state will accept a Maine HOUSSE as assurance of “highly qualified” status.

Questions and Answers



5. When and how often must I complete these forms?

Teachers of core academic subjects must complete the appropriate Maine *"Highly Qualified" Identification Form* AND the *"Highly Qualified" Statement of Assurance Form* once for each core content area teaching assignment. Teachers who do not accrue 100 points on the HOUSSE must update the HOUSSE rubric and action plan annually until the 100-point total is achieved. Teachers may need to complete additional forms if they have a change in their teaching certification or teaching assignment(s).

6. Who will make the determination if there is a question as to whether a specific item will count toward the 100 points on the Maine HOUSSE Standard Rubric?

The rubric (system) is designed for the teacher to self-report, but if there is a question about whether a specific professional development activity would meet the requirement or not, it should be resolved with the district's designated "HQT" official. In some situations, this is the building Principal, in others, it may be the Support Team Chair.

7. Will an elementary teacher who opts to complete the HOUSSE content rubric to document "highly qualified" competency need to show 100 points for each core content area he or she teaches?

No. Elementary teachers need 100 points on one rubric across the four elementary content areas: reading/language art, mathematics, science, and social studies. You must provide evidence of content knowledge in each of these subjects for a combined total of 100 points.

8. What years of experience may I count in the HOUSSE?

Count each year you have taught the subject for which "highly qualified" teacher status is being sought regardless of whether the experience was in a different school or school district. For example, if you taught 4th grade for three years in New Hampshire and 3rd grade for two years in Maine, this totals five years elementary teaching experience. If you taught five years English/Language Arts in middle school and ten years middle school Social Studies, this does not count for fifteen years middle school experience. It counts as five years in one content area and ten years in a second content area.

Questions and Answers



9. How will I document the HOUSSE option to show that I am “highly qualified” in the core subject area(s) that I teach?

Worksheets are attached to the HOUSSE rubric. You will also need to describe the evidence that you are presenting and attach relevant documentation.

10. What happens once the forms have been completed?

Gather all completed forms and documentation and review them with your building principal or school district designated "HQT" official. Complete the Statement of Assurance form jointly with this official. You must maintain a personal copy of all forms and Statements of Assurance. A second copy will be kept at the school building or district level.

11. If I hold a Master’s Degree in Education (MEd.) with no specific academic major, how is this recognized in the HOUSSE rubric? Also, if I teach 3rd grade and have a Master’s Degree in literacy, how/where is this recognized?

You would receive 10 points under Column E. “Advanced Degree - Education Related” for either or both.

12. Which HOUSSE should an elementary reading specialist use?

If the reading specialist has a Master’s Degree in Literacy, and that is his/her assignment, then he/she is “automatically” “highly qualified” and does not need to do HOUSSE. However, if the reading specialist does not have a Master’s Degree, he/she would need to use the Elementary HOUSSE and demonstrate competency in reading/language arts ONLY, not the other elementary core curricula.

13. How many course hours does an elementary teacher need in reading/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies for the elementary HOUSSE?

Elementary teachers must provide evidence of content knowledge in EACH of these four core areas. There is no minimum requirement, but each must be represented.

14. If I serve as a mentor to five teachers throughout the year, would this count as five experiences?

If all five mentoring experiences were in the same content area, this would count as one experience. However, if the mentoring were in two or more content areas then *each* would count as one experience.

Questions and Answers



15. What is the difference between "Mentor Teacher" in Column D of the rubric and "Work with mentor/support team" in Column C?

Column D refers to serving as a mentor to a beginning teacher or to someone transitioning to a new content. Column C refers to being the "mentee," i.e., the person *receiving* content support/mentoring.

16. If I have served as Chair of the English Department for five years, do I get 5 points per year of service (5 x 5=25 points)?

This represents one service for which you would receive 5 points. However, if you serve as Chair of the English Department AND Chair of the Foreign Language Department, you would receive 5 points for each of these services.

17. Who decides whether particular courses apply towards the coursework required in the content area taught by the teacher?

The teacher provides the evidence: course titles, descriptions, and documentation to support that the course work is appropriate to the content he/she is teaching. The teacher signs a *Statement of Assurance* form verifying that this information is accurate and correct. The local "HQT" official signs off on this. The State does not analyze transcripts for purposes of *NCLB* "highly qualified" teacher designation.

18. If I teach math and science, may I count a math/science seminar twice?

Yes. You may apply this as evidence for "highly qualified" status in math and for "highly qualified" status in science, if you are teaching both math and science.

19. May I choose the content area in which I wish to be "highly qualified"?

No. You must achieve "highly qualified" status for each content area you are currently ASSIGNED to teach.